

III. MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This section lists the proposed management goals and actions as well as impacts and avoidance and mitigation measures that will enable achievement of the mission.

A. Standard Operating Procedures

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), are a standardized procedure to handle routine or ongoing tasks. They do not allocate resources or specify uses, nor are they management actions. Instead, they articulate how the managing partners will handle certain situations in order to attain the objectives laid out in this plan.

The following SOPs are included to provide the managing partners with additional guidance as this CPNA plan is implemented. Adherence by the managing partners to the SOPs adopted in the final plan is non-discretionary.

1. Environmental Review and Documentation

The purpose of this section is to identify the process that is going to be used to conform with NEPA/CEQA regulations, including ESA and CESA requirements, and management goals, identify possible conflicts in priority actions, respond efficiently to proposed actions, provide a summary of the proposal's impacts and to evaluate mitigation effectiveness.

Management actions proposed for implementation will be evaluated to assure they are within the scope of this plan and covered under the environmental documentation. Proposals may be generated by the managing partners, other cooperators or third party applicants. If the proposal is within the scope of this plan and will result in surface disturbance, the following process will be followed:

1. An Interdisciplinary (ID) team, which may be composed of personnel from each of the managing partners, cooperators and invited experts, will review the proposal for conformance with management goals and determine if a site inspection is necessary. A site inspection will be required unless prior knowledge or inventory sufficiently addresses resource concerns.
2. If the proposal is within the scope of the plan and covered environmentally then the ID team will initiate an Administrative Determination (AD), Negative Declaration (ND) or Categorical Exclusion (CE) and Finding of no Significant Impacts (FONSI) as appropriate (Appendix D).
3. Post Documentation - After the project is completed a standard form depicting the levels of impacts, mitigation effectiveness, and compliance will be evaluated and appended to the document.
4. If no surface disturbance is involved and it is consistent with management goals a record of decision will be adequate.

If the proposal is not within the scope of this plan it will be evaluated by the ID team to determine if the design can be modified to be consistent. If it can be modified, an Environmental Assessment (EA), ND or CE and decision record will be initiated and the following process will be followed:

1. Consultations with Native Americans, SHPO, USFWS, and DFG will be initiated as appropriate.
2. Post documentation, as describe above, will be completed.
3. The plan will be revie wed to determine the need to refine, maintain or amend or
4. If the project can't be modified to conform with the plan and management goals it will not be approved.

2. General Project Impacts

A general process for analyzing impacts and developing mitigation measures has been described above. Action items are presented later in varying levels of specificity. For each action, potential impacts to resources and mitigation measures are described. To reduce the amount of repetition, several classes of impacts and avoidance or mitigation are described here. If the impacts or mitigation measures are not included in the general discussion then more specific impacts and mitigation measures are described following each action.

a. General Surface Disturbing Impacts

Actions causing these impacts include mechanical removal of soil and subsoil, off road vehicle use and high use by livestock or humans. These activities can alter surface and subsurface distribution of cultural artifacts and features, collapse burrows, destroy vegetation, increase erosion or displace and harass wildlife. Surface clearances to determine the presence of listed species will be determined within uninventoried areas prior to the approval of a surface disturbing activity.

Cultural site integrity is impacted by mixing of contextual constituents, breakage and displacement of artifacts and features, and contamination of cultural matrices. The presence or absence of cultural properties is determined prior to the approval of any surface disturbing activity. When cultural properties are present, the project will be redesigned or modified to safely avoid or mitigate impacts.

When possible, projects will occur in previously disturbed areas. If this is not possible, site inspections may reveal areas relatively free of sensitive resources. If sensitive resources cannot be avoided completely, then areas with concentrated resources will be avoided.

Specific mitigation measures used will be determined on a case-by-case basis in NEPA/CEQA documentation and may include changes in project action, timing, use of biological monitors, etc. Impacts will be documented and included in an annual evaluation report to DFG, USFWS, and SHPO, as appropriate.

b. General Cultural Resource Impacts

A common disturbance to pictograph motifs is exfoliation of the rock surface by people rubbing against or touching them, damaging or obliterating the art. Natural oils on hands will stain, change the chemistry of the painted surface, and eventually obliterate the motif. A common impact to prehistoric and historic sites is the casual collection of surface artifacts which affects the context or relationship of the site's overall function.

Soil erosion can severely impact surface and subsurface cultural resource integrity. Potential secondary impacts to cultural resources caused by erosion will be analyzed during project planning. Residual impacts to cultural resources outside the project area must be carefully considered in all linear projects.

Maintaining roads which bisect archaeological sites is a common problem. A transportation plan may resolve this problem through appropriate treatment and avoidance measures.

c. General Wildlife Impacts

Wildlife harassment can be caused by a wide variety of actions, but usually occurs when the conditions to which individuals have habituated are changed. Harassment rarely results in direct mortality but can contribute to increased accidents, predation or starvation and lowered recruitment. The severity of the harassment depends partially on the individual animal(s) involved but usually is most damaging during periods of high stress such as in times of climatic extremes or during reproduction.

The distribution and abundance of avian predators (ravens, hawks, shrikes, and owls) can be increased with the addition of perches (fences, buildings, power poles, oil derricks) where previously absent, potentially impacting prey distribution and abundance.

If the proposed action cannot be altered to completely avoid wildlife impacts, its severity will be reduced by altering the time or place at which the activity occurs.

d. General Wildlife Collision Impacts

Wildlife can collide with fences, oil wells, transmission lines and poles, towers and buildings. Vehicle collisions can be a source of direct mortality. These collisions may result in injury or death, and stunned or injured animals are much more likely to be killed by predators. Included in this class of impacts are electrocution from transmission lines and ancillary facilities at oil wells.

Vehicle collision impacts can be reduced by setting and enforcing speed limits and mowing roadsides. Specific guidelines have been developed for the design of raptor-safe transmission poles and will be used throughout the CPNA. Structures will be designed or modified in coordination with the Condor Recovery Program to reduce the likelihood of condor use.

3. Avoidance/Mitigation Measures

a. General

Authorizations for new surface disturbing activities will encourage the use of existing corridors, avoiding impacts to listed species and minimizing impacts to significant cultural and paleontological resources, riparian communities and sensitive species.

New development within 1/4 mile of springs, guzzlers or riparian areas will be avoided whenever possible. This restriction is intended to minimize wildlife disturbance at key water locations and to limit impacts to sensitive watersheds. Activities that may be allowable in these areas include spring developments, water pipelines and fences. Power lines, roads and other linear developments may be allowed, with suitable mitigation, to cross riparian areas where there are no viable alternatives.

Exploration, construction and development activities will have seasonal restrictions imposed within 1/2 mile of raptor nest sites. Seasonal restrictions will allow for undisturbed courtship, nest building, incubation and fledging. This seasonal restriction may last as long as six months, depending upon species. Restrictions may be imposed around high use areas during other seasons.

Soil disturbing activities may be prohibited during periods of runoff, or when soils are wet and muddy, in order to minimize damage.

Upon completion of construction of a project, signs or barriers may be installed to prevent continued travel on construction roads.

Roads and well pads in areas of extremely unstable bedrock formations and active landslides will be precluded or will require special design criteria. Civil engineering studies or geotechnical studies will be required to determine feasibility prior to road and drill pad construction. New wells and power lines will not be developed within 100 yards of ridge lines to minimize potential impacts to condors.

All surface disturbing activities will be designed to minimize wind and water erosion. Consistency with state air pollution laws will be maintained.

A listing of hazardous materials on CPNA lands, their storage locations and the proposed method(s) of disposal will be required as a part of all appropriate authorizations.

Vegetation removal and surface disturbance will be minimized. Surface rehabilitation measures will be applied when needed to protect the soil surface. Hand clearing will be emphasized over use of heavy equipment.

A visual resource contrast rating will be conducted for all construction sites. Projects may be modified to protect visual resource quality.

All contemporary food related trash, such as wrappers, cans, bottles and food scraps will be placed in closed containers and regularly removed from a construction site.

All surface disturbing projects will be planned and designed to avoid impacts to significant cultural and paleontological resources to the greatest extent possible.

b. Biotic Communities

Surveys for sensitive resources will be completed prior to any activities that have the potential to affect natural communities and core species. Sensitive resource locations encountered during surveys will be marked for avoidance. Disturbance to San Joaquin kit fox dens, giant kangaroo rat burrows, San Joaquin antelope squirrel and blunt-nosed leopard lizard burrows, and burrows potentially used by species which may be listed under ESA/CESA in the future will be avoided to the greatest extent possible. Personnel familiar with the sensitive resource may be required to be present during construction activities.



Authorizations for surface disturbing activities near sensitive plants will require avoidance of those plants, or restrictions for all or a portion of the time period from germination to seed dispersal. Inventories for sensitive plant species will be conducted in order to identify areas to avoid. Topsoil and topography will be restored when the project is completed.

If more than 60 days has elapsed since the last biological field survey, an additional survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist, biological technician, or natural resource specialist before construction can begin.

All persons involved in project construction work will be informed of listed species in the project area, and specific measures which must be taken to avoid impacts to these species. They will also be required to sign a document acknowledging their understanding of these protective measures.

Development activities will be timed to minimize impacts to species. For instance, if burrows used by BNLL may be collapsed, the activity will occur when they are active and out of the burrow, and if nesting birds may be impacted, the activity will occur after the nesting season.



Projects that involve trenching should generally be scheduled during BNLL inactive periods (Oct - Mar) to reduce pitfall mortality, or should require several trench inspections per day. Escape ramps will be provided in all trenches, pits and water troughs. Trenches and pits may also be covered with plywood or similar material, and will be inspected regularly to removed entrapped animals. A final inspection of each trench and pit will be made before backfilling.

Pipe ends, culverts and similar structures will be thoroughly inspected for entrapped animals before being moved, capped or buried. Any animals found inside will be allowed to escape before the pipe or culvert is moved, capped or buried. During construction, all partially installed pipe ends, culverts, and similar structures will remain covered unless closely attended by a monitor.



If destruction of a San Joaquin kit fox den is unavoidable, the USFWS and DFG will be notified. Destruction of known or suspected natal or pupping dens will be avoided during the breeding season (November 1 to July 31). Destruction of natal or pupping dens known to be occupied will not be permitted until the den has been vacated. Any San Joaquin Kit Fox (SJKF) den will be monitored for at least three consecutive days to determine its current status prior to its destruction. Activity will be monitored by placing a tracking medium at the entrance(s) and by

spotlighting. If no activity is observed during this period, the den will be destroyed immediately to preclude subsequent use. If kit fox activity is observed at the den during this period, the den will be monitored for five consecutive days from the time of observation to allow any resident animal to move to another den during normal activities. Use of the den will be discouraged by partially plugging the entrance(s) with soil in such a manner that any resident animal can escape easily. Destruction of the den will begin only when the animal has moved to a different den. If the animal is still present after five or more consecutive days of plugging and monitoring, the den may be excavated. Excavation of the den will be conducted when it is temporarily vacant, for example during the animals' normal foraging activities. Destruction of the den will be accomplished by careful excavation with hand tools until it is certain that there are no kit foxes inside. The den will be fully excavated and then filled and compacted to ensure that kit foxes cannot re-enter or use the den during the construction period. If a kit fox is discovered inside the den, the excavation activity will cease and the animal will be allowed to escape.

Natural barriers will be utilized where possible for livestock control to reduce the amount of fence construction.

c. Cultural Resources

Cultural resource evaluation will be conducted for all projects that require soil disturbance.

Identification and avoidance or mitigation of adverse effect will be required as a condition of a lease, permit or license.

Any cultural or paleontological resource discovered will be reported to the Caliente Resource Area (RA) manager. All activity in the immediate area will be suspended until an evaluation of the discovery is made by the archaeologist to determine appropriate actions to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientific values and a written authorization to proceed is issued by the area manager.

Sensitive cultural resource records and site locations will be held confidential from the general public.

It is the managing partners' policy to avoid impact to significant cultural values whenever possible, and to retain a representative example of the full array of cultural resource site types and to avoid inadvertent loss or destruction of cultural and paleontological resources by actions or authorizations.

Additional archaeological surveys will be required in the event a proposed project or its location is changed or modified after the initial survey is completed. This survey and associated documentation must be completed prior to commencement of the project.

d. Native American

Before making land use planning decisions or approving projects that could result in changes to lands or resources, changes in access or alienation of lands, the managing partners will observe pertinent consultation requirements with Native Americans and the Carrizo Advisory Council.

Sensitive cultural resources and traditional life way values will be held confidential from the general public as appropriate.



It is the policy of the managing partners to avoid impact to significant cultural resources and traditional life way values whenever possible.

e. Minerals

Mitigation and avoidance measures for mineral resources and oil and gas activities are contained in the Caliente RMP and Technical Appendix.

f. Recreation



Groups of 20 or more people and any organized group using an area for recreational purposes will be required to obtain a Special Recreation Use Permit pursuant to CFR 43, Subpart 8372.

Requests for activities within the Caliente WSA will be evaluated in accordance with the Interim Management Policy until such time that the area is designated as wilderness or released from wilderness review.

Requests for recreational uses not identified in this plan will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Application for group activities will only be approved if they are compatible with sensitive resources and the mission of the CPNA.

Sanitary facilities will be provided at appropriate locations and serviced by contract or government forces.

All new public facilities will comply with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

g. Administration

Some realty actions originate from pre-existing third-party rights, and need no new authorization. All new realty actions will be consistent with Federal and State regulations and laws, the RMP and County general plans as much as possible.

1. Disposals

Exchanges may be arranged with private conservation organizations using statewide exchange and pooling agreements. Such exchanges need not balance land values exactly on each exchange, since the balance will be maintained on a statewide basis.

2. Leases and permits

Leases in existence when lands are acquired will be honored through their expiration date (third-party rights). Agricultural leases will be phased out within two years of land acquisition. Grazing leases may be renewed on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the management objectives of this plan.

Recreation and Public Purposes Act lease applications considered inconsistent with the mission of the CPNA will be rejected.

3. Rights-of-way

Valid rights-of-way or easements in existence when lands are acquired will be honored through their expiration date. In many cases, ownership of easements on servient estates will merge when a managing partner acquires the dominant estate.

Right-of-way applications will be evaluated using the management objectives of this plan. The CPNA is a right-of-way avoidance area. Where feasible, use of existing corridors may be allowed.

4. Unauthorized use, development & occupancy

Incidents of unauthorized use, occupancy or development on CPNA lands will be identified and resolved in a prompt, efficient manner. Back rental, damage compensation and rehabilitation or stabilization of damaged lands may be required at the expense of the trespasser. Attempts may be made to resolve trespass administratively before resorting to civil or criminal procedures for resolution.